FEMALE EDUCATION:

THE

IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

FOR THE

EDUCATION OF YOUNG WOMEN.

AN ADDRESS BEFORE THE OFFICERS AND STUDENTS OF MOUNT HOLYOKE FEMALE SEMINARY, JULY 18, 1867.

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FEMALE EDUCATION.

Female education is a topic on which the public opinion is as yet unsettled. There is no difference of opinion as to the importance of culture, literary, moral, and religious, as a preparation for the duties that devolve upon women. But what the culture should be, and how it should be obtained, are points still in dispute. Will public institutions best secure the results desired? Will private schools offer the most desirable opportunities for the needed discipline? are questions not yet decided. Are young women to be taught those sciences that are established upon principles and laws, and are clear statements of the truths taught, to be exacted of them in the class-room and at a public examination; or are the graceful accomplishments of education to be in some way secured without the intervention of the means so well known in schools for boys? The varieties of schools asking for patronage, and the almost ludicrous perplexity of parents in selecting schools for the education of their daughters, show that the popular judgment is not at all established on this question.

Without attempting a direct reply to any of these inquiries, I propose to speak of some social wants which will be best met by large public institutions for the education of young women.

First, I call attention to some general considerations in favor of large institutions of learning.

There is much more demanded of our universities than a mere inculcation of certain truths into the minds of students. To teach Latin, and Greek, and Mathematics, is the duty of the academy, but this by no means is a fulfilment of the calling to which those institutions must respond which bear the dignified name, "*Seats of Learning.*" The pupil, who is graduated from college and goes out with his prizes for excellence in English composition or Greek hexameters, is still no more a representative of the institution which he has left than a brick from the college chapel would be a representative of the edifice from which it was taken. Whether its philosophy be realistic or nominalistic, whether its theology be Unitarian or Trinitarian, is not at all to be gathered from the proficiency of its pupils in geometry, or the skill of its professors in elocution. A university is under obligation, indeed, to afford thorough instruction for individual minds, but its power over mankind is in this, that it affords an embodiment to ideas. I would not call it of itself *the* embodiment, for it may change its doctrines and currents of belief; but it *furnishes* a name and a substance to the ideas which it advocates and which it opposes. What I mean by the expression, *embodiment of ideas*, may be easily illustrated. The revealed Scriptures have been so unfolded and expanded as to give currency and a definite meaning to the words, "Trinity," "Kingdom of God," "Blessedness of the Righteous." Our systems of government have established themselves by giving reality to certain ideas which are adopted as of supreme authority. "The right of eminent domain," "The rights of inheritance," "The king can do no wrong," "The King never dies," are principles rendered palpable and efficient by the state, and the state

by them. Again, philosophy has rendered "morality" and "virtue" terms to which every mind attaches a clear meaning. These illustrations will sufficiently bring to view the truth that Institutes are everywhere based on ideas, and have the power in turn of making ideas clear and apprehensible by endowing them with an embodiment which the understanding is able to grasp.

Institutions of learning have their first work in the discharge of this function. Their fundamental and earliest achievement has been to create "the world of letters." All persons of education are of one guild, whether they are of the Old World or the New. He who enters into the thoughts of the learned, and appreciates their intellectual productions, stands upon a platform which, in some degree, raises him above his untaught fellow, and opens to him new converse and new occupations. The world of letters is not simply the opposite of barbarism, but consists of positive ideas — the sentiments common to educated men, the community of feeling which subsists among the learned, and the influence which letters by their own authority exercise in civilized society.

Aside from this work of the universities combined, there are particular ideas to which particular institutions give embodiment. The bare mention of the words "Oxford," "Cambridge," "Heidelberg," "Berlin," will sufficiently establish this statement. Tradition and Rationalism, Authority and Skepticism, at once suggest themselves when these names are uttered. The colleges of our own land—though none of them are yet perfected, and though the oldest and ablest are still advancing—are yet representatives of different ideas. Yale, Union, Amherst, are designations that awaken each its peculiar sentiments and associations. Much more do the names of mediæval colleges stand for different views and aims.

The work which is here ascribed to institutions of learning, it is obvious at a glance, can only be performed by those which are powerful, *i. e.*, firmly established and generally supported. There must be permanence and persistence in the presentation of the ideas. There must be leisure, study, advocacy on the part of life-long students, who are freed from, rather than absorbed in the wearisome routine of class-instruction. There must also be a combination and consent of many of the thinking and the wise, which shall make the sentiment of the institution a kind of probable representative of the common-sense of the world. No transient institution can render permanent and palpable that fundamental idea, "the world of letters." Colleges, like kings, must never die, if the inheritance of privilege and dignity in the world of letters is to be continued from age to age, like possessions under the government of the state. A school that is popular for a day may teach well the rudiments of Greek, but does nothing to show the world the worth of Greek thought, to reproduce in present forms the imperishable ideas of Socrates and Aristotle. A single scholar may impart to an institution with which he is connected, a tendency which shall distinguish it as long as it continues; but there is something more permanent than individual genius required to win for it the title, "a seat of learning." A Marsh, or a Hitchcock, may bequeath to a school in philosophy or science a reputation for eminence in a single department; but this will not so ground and root the institutions with which they are connected as to secure for them a fixed position and a vigorous growth. There is demanded in addition a foundation of wealth, the affection of alumni, the devotion of instructors, and finally there must be thrown over all the omnipresent consciousness that institutions live though men die.

It will perhaps seem that the remarks thus far made, can have reference only to colleges or other institutions established for the education of young men. But I believe the sentiments just expressed are, at least *will be*, equally applicable to institutions of learning established for either sex. All schools, for whomsoever intended, participate in the privileges belonging to the world of letters. Beyond this, in the more vigorous pursuit of particular

departments of study, I know of no patents issued to the male sex. In the high and serene enjoyments of learning, I know of no capacities or susceptibilities with which men have been exclusively endowed. It is true society and nature have allotted different duties and different spheres of action to the two sexes, and this truth should have its influence upon their respective courses of study. But that which is peculiar to seminaries for females, demands, it seems to me, permanence, organization, the *esprit de corps*, the power to embody ideas, quite as much as that which is peculiar to the schools of the other sex. There is no difficulty in designating in general terms the respective fields of labor belonging to men and to women. The mass of educated men will not wander far for the professions that demand skill and scientific knowledge. They must *work;* to that nature compels; and they will choose employment for which their culture, rather than mere physical strength, fits them. The mass of educated women will not wander far from those occupations and employments which distinguish elevated social life. They too must work, but they will choose employments above those servile offices which the ignorant and helpless of their sex usually discharge. They will have the care of intelligent and cultivated households; they will, through the printing-press or the class-room, be the teachers of the young. Their work, almost without exception, will be that which directly serves society; *the human being* will be the object on which their labors will be expended. They will not be miners, navigators, soldiers, but they must labor within the range of civilized life. Leaving those who are gifted with genius to mark out their own path, we are concerned now with the sensible, intelligent, unpretending mass, who are capable of preparing themselves by education for the duties of life; and my conviction is, that for them, there is need of schools that shall embody and render palpable and permanent certain important ideas. Society imperiously demands it. Women are society. They are the civilized members of the human race. At least no one will deny that they represent the civilization of the community. Recognizing the truth that they may rise to any height of attainment, and not less recognizing the sad truth that they sometimes descend to the lowest depths of vice—still we must affirm that they fix the level of the social world; they constitute its average; they in the sum *are* its level. They have a power over the intelligence and morality of the community which men cannot wield. They appoint the standard of education to which it shall rise, while men but slightly and indirectly influence it. Women, therefore, far more than men, come near to, and lay hold of the practical; they put to service the common-sense of the age, they render *availing* the intelligence and morality inculcated in schools.

I propose, therefore, to speak of some social improvements which the good of society demands, which must be, to a great extent, effected by the influence of women, and which, as it seems to me, may be most easily and surely effected through their large and permanent institutions of learning.

1. We need a higher morality in society. When we see the place that the malignant passions are allowed to have in our morals and our religion, we are constrained to say that there must be a new sentiment inculcated — one that shall change the very foundations of practical virtue. The passion for revenge, and the pride of triumph over opposition, have dictated the code of honor as yet to half the people of the United States. Nor could a system in open and confessed opposition to the teachings of Christianity have thus far maintained itself, unless ferocious women had smiled upon fiendish men in their adherence to this morality of hell. A still more widely extended evil, is the little value that is set upon those good men and women who are called the pillars of society, and the esteem accorded to the successful aspirants after wealth or honor acquired by means however questionable. These are mere illustrations of the gross morals of the present age. The reform which the world urgently demands —cries out for—must be effected if not

wholly, yet very much by female influence. Women are the natural and divinely appointed guardians of the world's virtue. The sentiments of right and wrong imbibed in childhood are of their teaching. And these sentiments are the foundation on which all practical morals rest. The entire structure of human morals has this basis—the instruction which children receive when the mind lies almost passive under the mother's hand. Moreover, it is the province of women to dictate what shall be tolerated in, and what shall be excluded from the social world. Philosophizing on the nature of virtue is permitted to any, but to establish the boundaries of social morality is permitted to the gentler sex alone.

And, again, morality does not include simply the ordinary questions of right and wrong; it embraces also the questions of honor and propriety, which have so much to do in giving tone to society. The morality which commends any social state to the finer judgment, and to the taste of persons of well-cultivated minds, has, besides its honesty and justice, an atmosphere of agreeableness, an aroma of modesty; has an elegance, fitness, and concinnity which are its most distinguishing characteristics. And these nameless graces—altogether a bestowment of woman's mind—are all-important. They *constitute* as well as adorn, they *protect* as well as display, the virtues of a cultivated community. In this choicest and noblest field of human labor, woman does her work. It is for her to give the world a morality better than legality, graced with the delicate qualities of sensitive honor, high self-respect, Christian courtesy, forbearance, and charity. Nor will any person affirm, after sober reflection, that all this realm may not be made as palpable, and completed to as adequate a fulness as has been the realm of law, of religion, of philosophy. The ingrained moral state of man is more abiding than his intellectual convictions. A Hume may convince himself of the truth of his skeptical theories; he cannot rid himself of the feelings which he imbibed in childhood as to the authority of religion. Men are in morality very much what they are taught to be. If they practically fail, they yet appreciate and inculcate the virtues early enforced upon them. The excellences, the deficiencies of men, are to be accounted for by their education. That Fox should be sensitive to the laws of honor, and reckless of the requirements of the statute, was due to the early teaching to which he was subjected; that other statesmen should dignify the morals of legality and abuse those of honor, will be found to arise from the circumstances of early life. Notice the conspicuous deficiencies of our public men and their marked virtues, and you will find from each the evidence that the world of morals may be made as complete, as stable an object of contemplation, an object of as ready application as the science of astronomy or psychology.

But to secure this result there must be harmony of sentiment and unity of purpose through the world. Woman, by her native tact, has done much, sometimes most nobly, even uneducated. But we cannot rely on the native sense of any individual. We must not demand of the myriads, as units, to do each the best possible, and that spontaneously and independently. We must discover the general sentiments of the world; we must elicit the utterance of the common-sense of mankind; we must have institutions that teach the laws of mind and the science of morals in the utmost possible fulness. We must have a public spirit going out from these seminaries of learning that shall be one and the self-same spirit, whether manifested in Maine or Texas; we must have a sentiment sustained by an alliance extending through all the land, each member of which shall have a personal interest in its prevalence and in its perfect soundness. In this way the honor of classic learning is sustained, the appreciation of science is assured; in this way, also, the dignity of morals might be nurtured and supported.

Aside from morals, there are certain *refinements* of social culture which we cannot include under the designation of right and wrong, nor connect with the more graceful morality of which I have spoken,

which yet the world needs, and of which it should have a stronger, a firmer hold. It is difficult to reduce the elegancies of life to a science, undoubtedly, but there are certain foundations of refined culture, of elevated civilization, which we ought to make apprehensible to the ordinary mind. There is a difference between style and fashion, between the elegant and the tawdry, between the beautiful and the gaudy, which can be made a subject of rules, and on which the laws of civilization may be founded. There is here a spirit which may be incarnated, or perhaps I should say an idea which may be made practical, and therefore an opportunity to do the world an essential service.

It may be thought unjust to throw all this burden on female seminaries, but I think the needed reform is in the peculiar field of woman's work. As in morality, so in the refinements of life, the practical and stable, the prevalent and admitted are her dictate. Any one may theorize, *individual* culture may be carried forward by man or woman; but men cannot rule the *popular* taste, nor sustain an advanced position in the *popular* culture. Whoever may make the forward movement in this department, women must render the higher sentiment a constituent of social life. They are the conservators of the refined sentiments and feelings of the world; they only have the power to transform a *theory for* society into a *habit in* society. This work, which is a sacred trust of Providence, they will best accomplish through powerful, broadly influential institutions of learning—institutions which shall stamp their ideas upon an organized mass, united in purpose, and so able in good measure to give law to society at large.

The theme is worthy of a fuller statement, and of discussion upon some of its points of special interest. The refinements of society may in general be said to arise from two sources, a nice critical judgment, and a proper sensitiveness in the field of the higher pleasurable emotions. These two are indeed closely allied, and may be considered together in all the departments of elegant culture; but I shall speak of them separately, connecting with each those topics in which it prominently appears.

2. I remark, then, as we depend upon woman for a better morality, so we depend upon her for a higher literary culture. I know of nothing that would so add to the wealth of the world as a better appreciation of the worth and beauty of *words*. Is it not possible to inculcate upon society, from the highest to the lowest, some plain principles of literary judgment? In our country we are shamefully deficient in these matters; we are as far behind the Greek civilization of two thousand years ago as we are in advance of the Indians of the Rocky Mountains. We ought to ask, seriously, what is the cause of the evil? What makes the demand for such floods of poor books? what renders so acceptable such empty lectures? Is it that women now hold a place far in advance of that allowed them in the older civilization, and that they use words with a heedless freedom to which men are incompetent? Women speak so fluently without a careful study of languages, that the unthinking may assume that they can dispense with the study of them. And they speak so easily that I fear their study may not always control their vocabulary, may not mould their habits of speech. But whatever may be their guilt in this matter, I may safely say we sadly need reform, and we need their most efficient aid in the work. For this purpose I urge in the course of study in such institutions as this a large attendance to the languages, both ancient and modern. The ancient are the models of taste. In graphic, picturesque expression they have not been equaled, and in nervous compression modern productions hardly seem to indicate kindred blood. Of the modern languages there is one in which I wish the female seminaries would make themselves leaders, going in advance of our most ancient and venerable universities; I refer to the *English*. English literature is a world of itself. The history of its formation, its words, its idioms, its works, which serve as models (apart from the thought they contain), afford a most delightful theme

for study, while the mastering of them *is* an education. It should be required of any one, who is known as fitted for a high place in society, to understand the English tongue, to know what are its powers, what it can spare, what it should hold fast, to be able authoritatively to criticise the language of public speech and private conversation. Yet this knowledge would be but the entrance to the temple. The intellect, the emotional nature, ought to be cultivated and enlarged by the thoughts of our great poets, our satirists, our essayists, and some of our writers of fiction.

But I am not to lay down a course of reading, I only speak of results which we desire, of literary taste as it should be, leaving the method of securing it to be selected by practical teachers. I will not, however, dismiss this theme without first pointing briefly to one or two urgent demands actually existing at the present time.

We need a literary taste that shall banish obscenity from the language of public address. There are many popular speakers, some of them pulpit orators, there are many writers tolerated at least, who are in the habit of using for the eye and ear of the *world* language and illustrations which they would never use in private conversation. Their instinctive delicacy would repress the words if they were to meet the responsive or frowning eye of a friend at hand; but the consciousness of being delivered from immediate individual criticism seems to harden their sensibilities, and they revel in allusions or figures which betray essential impurity of heart. Now, there is no need of this resort; our language is copious, and the world affords abundant simile and metaphor for the truly poetic mind. The indulgence to which I allude is simply vulgarity or impurity, whether it appears in the yellow-covered novel, or in the sermon. And I beseech those who can remedy such evils, (and it is in the power of educated women to do it) to banish this literary immorality as far from written words as from words of conversation; to make our churches scenes of as much propriety as their own parlors.

Another thing to be banished from the literary world is an admiration of tawdry ornaments. Holmes has satirized the rural idea of beauty of person. He says it means "*fat and red.*" There are those of *civic* pretensions to whose *literary* taste the sarcasm would apply. They admire the swollen and high-colored. I once entered a crowded hall where a popular preacher was addressing the pupils and patrons of a school gathered at its anniversary exercises. It was while the rebellion was in progress; his subject was announced as "the duties of educated men to their country." I heard only the fervid conclusion of the discourse, but was the more anxious to get the full benefit of all that was allowed me. I pressed my way through the aisle, surrounded by waving handkerchiefs, amid cheering and clapping of hands, till I reached my appointed station. I found the eloquence of the orator to consist of two things: first and chiefly, in the movements of his hands, which gracefully in alternate strokes formed their curved lines in the air as if he were lazily swimming in a sea of tepid nectar; and secondly, in a flippant bandying of sonorous words such as "glory," "the bed of honor," and "the gratitude due to the brave." There was no pretense of an idea in what was uttered; it was plain that the speaker in beginning a sentence knew no more how it would end than did the children before him. I was told that his method of preaching was the same. But however he preached, it is certain that his church was filled; he was very popular with the ladies, seats rented well, and the more discerning endured him. I should say they endured him for a time, for he has been dismissed from two parishes since delivering the lecture to which I refer.

What we need is a culture of taste, a power of discriminating in oratory and rhetoric, that shall make such things impossible. And this culture must be attained through schools by patient study, and by the early inculcation of sound principles of taste. The religious society, to whose pastor I have alluded, finally learned one thing—that they had been in

one instance mistaken in their judgment, but they learned nothing else by their experience; they do not now know that they are liable to be the victims of every literary quack. So long as the gentler sex have virtual control of churches, (and I trust they long may have it) it is their sacred duty to cultivate a just criticism, and to frown upon a pretentious rhetoric as well as upon a hypocritical pietism.

3. Another thing which we need in the civilization of our day and country is *a more extensive and pervasive influence from the fine arts.* The earth, harsh and rugged in its outline in the state in which geology leaves it, is mellowed and adorned by the gentlest influences. The soft pattering rain rounds the angles of the rocks; the unseen, almost unfelt, atmosphere wakens life in its abraded dust. Even the frosts work slowly, insinuatingly and stealthily; and the heat of the sun, which, with the frosts, grinds the rocks as between the upper and nether millstone, yet works so gently and silently, that you know not when its work is doing—you can only say it is done.

A similar work is required for the rude mind of man. We need some influence that shall mitigate its asperities; that shall level, at least slope, its abruptnesses; that shall wake to life the germs of those graces of soul which bare existence and subsistence do not develop. The refinements of life arising from the critical judgment I have spoken of, I now refer to those which are connected with the pleasurable emotions. Beauty is a power in education. The mind is improved by coming under its influence, by daily converse with its teachings, and within its proper realm, by life-long, uninterrupted submission to its authority. The mind is susceptible of culture in many capacities, for which there are no names, which are known only in their development, and which come to view, certainly to consciousness, under the influence of the Beautiful. An indulgence of the susceptibility to pleasurable emotions produces what is known as the mellowness of culture, accomplishments of mind, elegancies of education, gentleness of spirit. We are to bear in mind that in education there is required a passive state as well as an active one, and that we are well formed in spirit, rather by being moved than by moving; by suffering self to be moulded, rather than by becoming self-architects. And this portion of education is one which has been too much neglected in our country. Our enterprise, our habit of making our own way, has been carried into education also. We have tried to master, not to be mastered, to carry off captive Virgil and Milton, rather than be captivated by them. We have even matched our energies against time. We have thought, if we could perform the routine of a three years' course in two years, we had gained a year; whereas we have lost even those we seemed to have. Time will not hasten, or work at our bidding. The powers and influences that mould the mind in its process of education work slowly, and he only is properly educated who submits patiently to their appointed movements,—movements controlled by laws not to be repealed. The truth of these observations is perfectly obvious so far as they relate to education by the fine arts. Their study, therefore, would introduce a much-needed element in our culture, aside from the intrinsic value of their influence. But I plead now for their proper effect upon the mind. It is the mellowness, geniality, sensitiveness, and general power of delicate apprehension which they produce, that I would have added to our ordinary American culture.

Two inquiries will naturally suggest themselves at this point. 1. Are we dependent upon the fine arts for the results which we desire? 2. And are female seminaries specially responsible in this matter? In reply to the first, I think it may safely be affirmed, that we are dependent upon fine art, mainly, for the graceful culture of which I speak. Religion, in its more superficial and less important influences, to some extent, effects the desired object. It produces the gentleness of spirit which we so much desire; it often begets beneath an uncouth exterior a mellowness of soul, a depth and richness of emotion, which assure us that the

treasures of heaven have been committed to earthen vessels. But religion does not fulfil its mission in adorning the earthly life, and is not intended to preclude the industry, care, and discipline which society demands.

It will be affirmed by some that Nature is the true teacher in the realm of the beautiful; we have had poets, like Wordsworth, who have almost found in Nature both art and religion. But it will be found in practice that art is the only teacher on which we can rely. Art is not the imitation but the concentration of nature. It is not the whole of nature imitated, but one element made prominent, *made* the whole for the occasion; it is the perfection of nature's beauty or sublimity eliminated from its length and breadth and coarse material. We might as well send the child to the sky to learn astronomy as to go ourselves directly to Nature for lessons in beauty. The beauty is there, but it has been the work of the genius of the world to detach it and lay it up in verse or in *galleries* of art; as the product of the study of the heavens, from the days of Chaldean astrologers, may be concentrated in a printed volume. Pupils in astronomy may learn in a brief course of study that which Sir Isaac Newton never knew, while from the book of nature he himself discovered but fragments of the science, to be added to the knowledge of observers who had preceded him. So the uninformed judgment may acquire more in an hour from a good painting or a good statue than from Nature in years.

Art is to nature what "The Paradise Lost" is to history. It has nothing of history, and yet it contains imbedded in it all the noble sentiments which the history of the world has developed. The ideas of beauty and grandeur which genius has dislodged from nature and expressed in art may almost be found in a single gallery. And being expressed in their purity, and without distracting or counteracting sentiments, there can be no question that art, not nature, is our teacher in the elegancies of education.

In reply to the second question, should schools for young women consider themselves under any special responsibility in this matter, it may be said: it is important that their schools should not be defective in this regard rather than those for the other sex. The intelligence, taste, and judgment of women, as I have already noticed, constitutes the intelligence of society. They may, in individual cases, rise above the level of the time; but their *average* culture *is* the level of the time. They fix the standard, they raise society to their level, and *practically* what is above them is unavailing. Nor will it be denied that, so far as the world is profited by being pleased, it is woman's province to confer the benefit, for it is her province to please. In one of the arts—music—she already considers proficiency a duty. In other arts she may be equally well educated, and may far more surely attain to excellence. I do not refer now to any practical skill in works of art, but to a cordial appreciation of them.

In their favorite art, music, women only reproduce, for with all their excellence as performers, they have, it is said, uniformly failed as composers; and in criticism upon painting, sculpture, architecture, or oratory, they might also reproduce, if only in imagination and criticism, and might thus embody in the culture of the times the established and admitted truths that have been evolved by the achievements of genius.

I would not, therefore, consider any institution established for the education of girls complete till it had been furnished with the best representations of works of art in every department in which genius has won its triumphs. Nor would I consider any education complete for young ladies going from school, which did not the power to discriminate between the include graceful and the fashionable, the elegant and the high-wrought. They ought notto be sent out into the world till they have the eye to discern the beauty there is in Nature, and till they possess a standard by which the so-called refinements of life are to be measured.

It would be wrong to close this address without allusion to the religious influence of an institution like this. Mt. Holyoke

Seminary has done much for the extension of vital godliness in the land and in the world; it has done still more in imparting a healthfulness of sentiment to the religious mind of the country. And on this point seminaries like this have a work to do. We need to have all the power of great institutions exercised in that function of which I have spoken, viz., giving embodiment to ideas, in imparting a solid external reality to this truth—that religion is in accord with a sound, healthful, symmetrical culture of mind. The world needs to *feel* rather than *admit* the force of this assertion. To many minds—to the majority of the gay and ambitious—piety means constraint, ill health, suffering; it means purchasing heaven by wretchedness on earth. The remedy for the evil which seems just now most popular, is to show that one can enjoy the amusements of the world and be still a follower of Christ. Certain associations of Christian young men are attempting the demonstration. A few ministers have advocated this remedy from the pulpit. It will, however, be found to be but temporary in its medicinal effect. It is but *freezing* the blood to cure a fever. We want a healthful and happy Christian life, flowing out of religion itself. Religion is not contrary to nature, but is in accord with a higher and better nature. It is not, therefore, to be patronized by nature corrupt, but to have a free course and be glorified through a nature renewed. Religion is to be presented to the world as the most natural, the most joyous, the most defensible, the most desirable method of life. A sentiment like this will, as I think, be best established, indeed is far established already, by the influence of female seminaries.

Women do not, it is true, control the sentiments of the religious world, as they do those of the social world. But the current ideas of practical religion they do to a great extent impart to our communities. As to numbers, they are greatly in the majority among the members of our churches. They are considered to have more just views of the practical truths of religion than their brothers, and to be more scrupulous in the discharge of duty. They also impart to the young the sentiments in reference to religion which form the foundation of whatever superstructure may afterward be erected. We must look to woman, then, to impart to the world just, wholesome, attractive views upon this subject. She must be delivered from superstition, imbibe the cultivated and scholarly estimate of Christianity, and be deeply imbued herself with the idea that the follower of Christ has the promise of this life, as well as the life to come; that there is no religion in poverty or privation, in unnecessary suffering or in artificial humiliations. She must also be deeply imbued with the idea that, if sufferings, trials, or dangers beset the Christian life, they are to be met skilfully, to be fought courageously, and endured patiently. We are both to avoid rebellion against God by proper resignation, and to avoid tempting him, by the utmost effort to overcome difficulties. Seminaries of learning can do much—this seminary has done much—in imparting a healthful tone to the piety of those who give tone to the piety of the world. Every one who goes from this place uncomplainingly to the toils of missionary life, makes a noble contribution to the good cause. Every one who teaches through books for Sabbath-schools the lessons of devotion here inculcated, promotes the same cause. Every one who learns here that life is of small account, but to live well the chief duty, and who enforces this truth in life, gives efficacy to the same instruction. In a word, whoever makes a reality of the first and last great lesson taught by this school, that the best religion is in the highest and noblest deeds, is helping to impart to the world a just estimate of the naturalness and healthfulness of our Christianity.